

# SNAPSHOT: SITUATION OF ROMA IN EUROPE

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

**28%**

of Roma in the EU feel they have been **discriminated against in everyday situations** such as looking for work, at work, housing, health and education.

**50%**

of Roma were, to a lesser or greater extent, **familiar with equality bodies and human rights institutions.**

**Underreporting** of discrimination against Roma has increased significantly, from 16% of total estimations of **reported discrimination cases** in 2016. In 2021 it made up only

**5%**

**28%**

of non-Roma think there is **widespread discrimination against the Roma** in their country, while

**77%**

**don't have a Roma friend or acquaintance.**



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The EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation rightly names antigypsyism as a cross-cutting priority, and calls on Member States to end institutional racism and segregation. It mirrors the language developed by the *Alliance Against Antigypsyism* and must be fully reflected in EU and national laws, on equal footing with antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Roma communities in Europe have endured centuries of historical antigypsyism, from forced expulsions and enslavement to segregation and discriminatory laws. During the Holocaust, hundreds of thousands of Roma were victims of genocide, a tragedy often overlooked in mainstream history, as are practices such as forced sterilisations of Roma women.

Europe's Roma continue to face systemic racism, discrimination, and hate crimes rooted in antigypsyism. These deeply entrenched injustices drive high levels of poverty, social exclusion, and unequal access to essential services such as education, healthcare, housing, employment, and participation.

The Roma have long been scapegoated by public discourse and negative rhetoric from public officials, amplified by media outlets and fueling generalised hate speech. From being portrayed as lazy to being falsely blamed for spreading COVID-19, this has yielded oppressive responses ranging from thinly-veiled hostility to outright police brutality and racially motivated violence against Roma communities in multiple countries.

Access to justice is also curtailed for many Roma due to financial hardship, lack of information, systemic bias within legal institutions, and institutional resistance to addressing Roma rights violations. These are not isolated issues—they are symptoms of structural discrimination that requires urgent political will and coordinated action to dismantle.

An effective approach must also address multiple and intersectional discrimination, recognising that Roma women, children, LGBTQIA+ people, persons with disabilities, and older Roma (among other vulnerable categories) face layered and specific barriers, and require tailored support.

Ending antigypsyism is not just a Roma issue; it is a European imperative. At the same time, promoting Roma identity, history, and cultural heritage – including the diversity and richness within Roma communities – is essential to building inclusive, democratic societies.



The umbrella term "Roma" encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal, as well as Traveller populations (gens du voyage, Gypsies, Camminanti, etc.), in accordance with terminology used by the [European Commission](#).

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## Recommendations:

- **Integrate anti-antigypsyism efforts into all principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights**, addressing systemic barriers such as segregation, forced evictions, environmental injustice, and discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, housing, social protection, participation, and access to justice.
- Formally **recognise antigypsyism in EU and national legislation as a distinct form of racism**, consistent with definitions by the European Commission and Parliament and aligned with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia and, the Race Equality Directive.
- Member States should create **concrete, measurable national action plans for combatting antigypsyism**, distinct from general anti-discrimination strategies, to effectively tackle the unique challenges faced by Roma communities.
- **Require collection of disaggregated statistical data by ethnic background** to track progress on social rights and anti-discrimination measures, linking these to the EU Roma Strategic Framework. Develop structural and impact indicators to measure progress in combating antigypsyism within mainstream social, economic, and environmental policies.
- **Monitor, sanction, and prevent the dissemination of hate speech** and scapegoating of Roma by media, politicians, and public figures, including ethicising crimes allegedly committed by Roma.
- Ensure **thorough investigation and zero tolerance for police violence**, abuse, and intimidation targeting Roma individuals and communities, or other racialised minority or impoverished groups. Eliminating bias in police reporting, prosecution, and court judgments and addressing the overrepresentation of Roma in prisons and incidents of ill-treatment in custody.
- **Improve access to legal counsel and redress by providing** free legal aid and by enhancing the monitoring, reporting, and prosecution of hate crimes and hate speech targeting Roma, while implementing a rights-based approach and enforcing the Rule of Law.
- Adopt and enforce concrete plans to **end Roma educational and spatial segregation**, by supporting equal educational opportunities for Roma children, protecting Roma communities from forced evictions and implementing anti-bias training for civil servants and public service providers.
- **Set up Truth and Reconciliation Committees** or Independent Expert Commissions to confront historical injustices such as forced sterilisations, slavery, and school segregation of Roma, and promote wider recognition of the Roma Holocaust across the EU.
- Include **specific budget lines in national funding to combat antigypsyism** and support Roma inclusion efforts, and simplify access to EU funds for grassroots Roma organisations to enhance their impact, not least by reinforcing enabling conditionalities.
- **Support meaningful Roma participation**, by involving Roma NGOs in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of national and EU strategies. Provide adequate financial resources and capacity-building to empower these organisations in policy advocacy and community engagement.



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